In respect of Telecom Engineering and Accounts and Finance posts, it is stated that keeping in view the fast changing business as well as technological scenario, need based promotions as well as outside recruitment had been done in the past and will be continued in future as well. Creation and filling up the posts are continuous processes.

Telephone connections

407. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of landline telephone connections, both by public and private service providers given across the country; and

(b) the number of mobile telephone connections, both by private and public service providers given across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) The number of landline and wireless telephone connections, both by public and private service providers in the country as on 31st December, 2008 are given below:

	By public service providers	By private Service providers
Landline telephone Connections (in million)	33.03	4.86
Wireless telephone Connections (in million)	50.41	296.48

Opening of new Post Office

408. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether several complaints have come up against Khabra Branch Post Office of Muzaffar Pur District (Bihar) concerning late/non-distribution of letters at Bhikhanpura Mohalla;

(b) whether it would be appropriate to open a new branch of Post Office at Bhikhanpura Mohalla and this suggestion have been given from residents too; and

(c) what are the requisite criteria for opening up this new Branch Post Office and by when the Government would be setting up of this new branch Post Office?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir. No complaint against Khabra Branch Post in Muzaffar Pur District (Bihar) has been received.

(b) and (c) Opening of new Post Offices is an ongoing process. Post Offices are opened in those places where there is demand and justification for Post Offices. Opening of new Post

Offices is also subject to availability of Plan Support/Targets. Requests for opening of new Post Offices are examined in terms of prescribed criteria (a copy of the criteria is enclosed). Postal facilities in terms of regular delivery of mail, collection of letters from Letter Boxes and selling of postage stamps/stationery at the door step of customers, are provided in every village through delivery agents. No suggestion/request for a new Post Office at Bhikhanpura Mohalla, has been received. A Post Office in the above location can be opened only if it fulfills the criteria laid down in this regard as indicated in the enclose statement (*See* below). In view of the above, a timeframe for opening of a Post Office at Bhikhanpura Mohalla cannot be fixed.

Statement

Norms for opening Post Offices

1. Norms for opening Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices:

1.1 Population

(a) In Normal Areas:

3000 population in a group of villages (including the PPO village)

(b) In Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:

500 population in an individual village or 1000 population in a group of villages.

1.2 Distance

(a) In Normal Areas:

The minimum distance from the nearest existing post office will be 3 kms.

(b) In Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:

The distance limit will be the same as above except that in Hilly Areas, the minimum distance limit can be relaxed by the Directorate in cases where such relaxation is warranted by special circumstances which should be clearly explained while submitting a proposal.

1.3 Anticipated Income:

(a) In Normal Areas:

The minimum anticipated revenue will be 33 1/3% of the cost.

(b) In Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:

The minimum anticipated income will be 15% of the cost.

It is further to be ensured that as a result of the opening of a new post office, the loss in respect of the parent post office does not increase beyond the permissible limit nor is its income reduced below the minimum prescribed.

2. Criteria for upgrading/opening Departmental Sub Post Offices:

(a) In Rural Areas:

The minimum work load of the Extra Departmental Branch Post Office, proposed to

be upgraded, should be five hours per day. The permissible limit of annual loss is Rs. 2400/- in Normal Rural areas and Rs. 4800/- in Tribal and Hilly areas.

It is further to be ensured that as a result of the opening of a new Post Office, the loss in respect of the parent Post Office does not increase beyond the permissible limit nor is its income reduced below the minimum prescribed.

(b) In Urban Areas

In Urban areas, the post office should initially be self-supporting, and, at the time of the first annual review, it should show a 5% profit to be eligible for further retention.

The minimum distance between two post offices should be 1.5 kms. In cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above, and 2 kms. in other Urban Areas. No two delivery offices, however, should be closer than 5 kms. for each other.

A delivery Post Office in Urban Area should have a minimum of 7 Postmen's beats.

Anomalies in pay structure of village postal employees

409. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is very low pay for village postal employees than those employees working in urban areas;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider to remove such disparity of pay scale for village postal employees;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (d) The Gramin Dak Sevak engaged in the Branch Post Offices are part time workers who perform duties ranging from 3 hrs. to a maximum of 5 hrs. per day. They are governed by a separate set of Rules called Gramin Dak Sevak (Conduct and Employment) Rules, 2001 not framed under Article 309 of the Constitution. Their wage structure is determined based on the work load corresponding to 3 hours upto a maximum 5 hours duty.

The Departmental employees and the Gramin Dak Sevaks are governed by different set of conduct and employment Rules, there is no parity in their wage structure.